

For Immediate Release

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CHRISTIE'S TO OFFER SUPERB SELECTION OF ANCIENT BRONZES AND VASES FROM A DISTINGUISHED PRIVATE COLLECTION

The Morven Collection of Ancient Art June 8, 2004

New York – Christie's will offer approximately 300 ancient works of art from the Morven collection, a landmark of taste and connoisseurship that was formed by an impassioned American collector over a 25-year period, in a single-owner sale on June 8 at Rockefeller Center. Remarkable for the depth and breadth of its ancient Classical bronzes and variety of Greek vases, the collection is expected to realize in the region of \$5 to \$7 million.

“Over a twenty-five year period the owner of this marvelous collection formed, without question, one of the finest private collections of its kind,” said G. Max Bernheimer, International Head of Antiquities. “Many of the works have renowned provenance, with pieces coming from the Bolla, Bomford, Cook, de Behague, de Sanctis Mangelli, and Moretti collections, to name a few.”

Although there are spectacular Egyptian bronzes and noteworthy examples from the Near East, the strength of the collection is the Classical material: Greek, Etruscan and Roman. All periods are well represented, from the Archaic Period, represented by a Greek griffin protome (estimate \$20,000-30,000) circa late 7th-6th century B.C., which was originally attached to the rim of a cauldron, through the Roman Imperial Period, as exemplified by an unusual Roman votive foot, (estimate: \$12,000-18,000) circa 1st-2nd century A.D., inscribed with a dedicatory inscription.

Among the most notable highlights is a fine Etruscan bronze kore, circa 490 B.C., whose voluminous garments are beautifully embellished with careful incision (estimate: \$70,000-90,000).

An impressive Roman protective civic god, or ‘genius,’ circa 1st-2nd century A.D., is significant in that he has the facial features and upswept hair of Alexander the Great. He wears a mantle around his waist, a mural crown upon his head, and holds a phiale and a cornucopia (estimate: \$80,000-120,000). A fine representation of the healing god Asklepius, a Roman work from the 2nd century A.D., is complete but for the snake-entwined staff upon which he would have leaned. The prototype for this is probably the work of the sons of Praxiteles, who sculpted images of the god and his family for the oldest temple in his sanctuary on the island of Kos during the late 4th or early 3rd century B.C. (estimate: \$30,000-50,000).

Although nearly all of the bronzes in the collection are small-scale, there is one quite large and extraordinary figure of a young god or athlete. For a bronze of this scale – it stands an impressive 44 inches high – the state of preservation is outstanding. The figure is depicted nude, standing with his left hand on his hip, his right extending forward, perhaps originally holding a kantharos. His hair is a mass of wavy overlapping locks, his eyes are inlaid in glass. This spectacular figure is a creation of the late Roman Republic or early Imperial period, circa 50 B.C. to 50 A.D., inspired by the work of the Greek sculptor Polykleitos (estimate \$1,300,000-1,800,000).

A selection of the bronzes from the Morven Collection was exhibited in 1996 at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

In addition to the bronzes, there is an important selection of almost 100 Greek vases. Splendid examples of the Athenian vase-painter’s art will be offered, both black- and red-figured. A red-figured column-krater, attributed to Myson, circa 500-480 B.C. features a nude youth depicted on both sides, one holding a drinking cup and a staff, the other carrying a large vessel (estimate: \$25,000-35,000).

The collection also includes rarities from the Greek colonies of South Italy in Apulia, Campania and Paestum, as well as an interesting stamnos painted further north in Etruria. A large Apulian red-figured amphora was included in the 1983 exhibition *The Art of South Italy, Vases from Magna Graecia* at the Virginia Museum of Arts, the Philbrook Art Center and the Detroit Institute of Arts. The vase depicts two draped women within a funerary temple or naiskos (estimate: \$20,000-30,000). Additionally, the sale will feature numerous decorative vases from South Italy in the Gnathian, Xenon and Teano traditions.

Auction: The Morven Collection of Ancient Art June 8 at 10 a.m. & 2 p.m.

Viewing: Christie’s Galleries, 20 Rockefeller Plaza June 4 – 7

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Images available on request